

Asilomar State Beach & Conference Grounds

General Plan Update

March 2001

A Renewed Effort

Asilomar's conference grounds have been part of the Pacific Grove Community for over 85 years and have been a part of the State Park System for

nearly a half-century. Asilomar has evolved in order to assure its world-renowned retreat status, while protecting its incomparable natural and cultural resources.

So that Asilomar may continue to meet the needs of our visitors, we must update the general plan that guides its management and development. New issues have arisen since the last general plan revision was completed in 1983.

Our intent with this renewed effort is to create a long-range plan that will ensure public enjoyment while continuing to protect the historic and natural resource values that help to create Asilomar's unique beauty and ambiance. We need your help in this planning process.



What's Next? A Public Meeting

Asilomar General Plan Public Meeting Date

When: 7pm. March 22, 2001

Where: Asilomar's William Penn Mott Jr. Training Center, Madrone Room, which is located off Crocker Ave between Sinex and Sunset in Pacific Grove.

Information: Phone 831-372-4076

The meeting will be the first opportunity since 1993 for those who have an interest in helping guide the future of Asilomar to assist the general planning team in identifying critical issues that Asilomar is currently facing or may face in the future. It is also an opportunity to express concerns and to bring up issues regarding Asilomar's impact on the local community (both the good and the not-so-good).

This is not a problem-solving meeting—that

will come later. We will focus on identifying concerns and issues, and so that everyone's valuable time is spent presenting NEW issues or concerns, an introductory presentation will provide an overview of earlier issues already being considered. The majority of those issues are listed on page 2 of this newsletter.

The planning team will subsequently select those issues that can and should be resolved in a general plan and develop alternative guidelines for solving critical issues, which will be presented at a subsequent public meeting to be scheduled for this fall.



Inventories, Concerns and Issues:

What Has Been Completed? What Work Remains?

The 1992 Asilomar general planning team completed much of the required resource inventory and issues identification work prior to the plan being put on hold for several years. During the next few months staff and contracted specialists will review the original work. They will identify data that requires updating and additional inventory efforts that may be required so that we have the most accurate picture possible of Asilomar's existing conditions.



For example, while the 1992 team identified pitch canker as being a significant threat to the health of the Monterey pine forest, the disease has spread faster and had a more devastating effect on the conference grounds' forest than originally thought. Present planning will need to consider the effect of this issue. Also, a preliminary traffic survey/analysis was begun for the roads surrounding Asilomar. We'll need to verify that those original numbers are accurate before we can objectively look at alternative traffic patterns.

Work had also moved forward toward identifying specific issues that needed to be addressed in the general plan. Those issues include:

toward identifying specific issues that needed to be addressed in the general plan. Those issues include:

- The failing Monterey pine forest
- Park visitor impacts to the park's dunes and tidal zones
- What buildings are historic and how can they best be used and protected
- Traffic flow in and around Asilomar
- Employee and guest parking
- Relocating guest registration from Asilomar's historic core
- Need for additional natural and cultural resources interpretation
- Changing Asilomar's facilities to meet changing public and local community needs
- Night lighting on the conference grounds
- Location of support facilities, such as housekeeping, maintenance and storage
- Vehicular traffic verses pedestrian traffic
- Need for additional administration space
- New facilities needs
- The need for an expanded recreation facilities around the pool area
- Need for restroom facilities near the beach
- Retaining Asilomar's historic "feel"

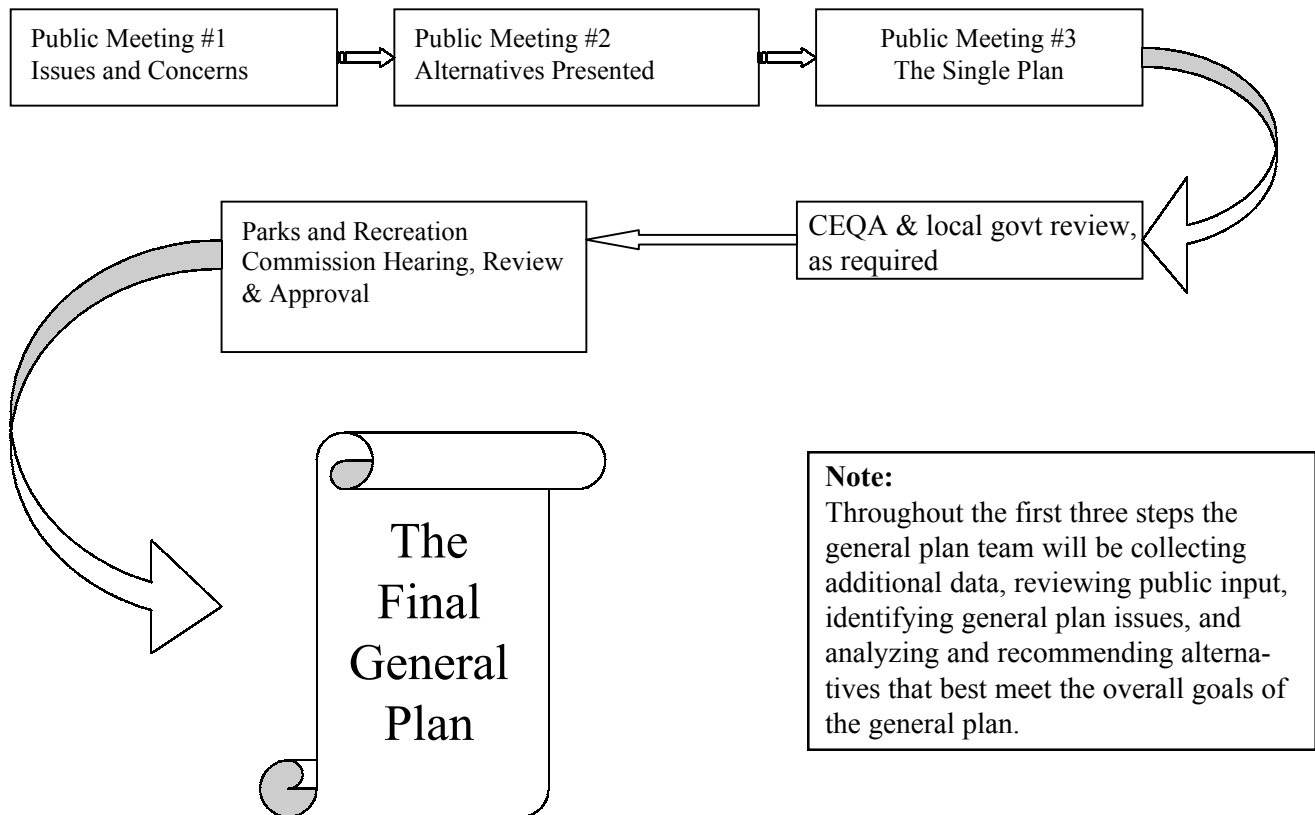
The above is not an exhaustive list of the issues previously identified, but an overview of many of the key issues that surfaced during internal (park and concession staff) and public meetings held in 1992-3 and recently reconfirmed as remaining valid today.

The General Plan Process

Preparation of the successful general plan is very much a collaborative process. Completing a successful plan requires collaboration among park professionals (planners, ecologists, archeologists, and historians) other government bodies, and the general public.

This need for such extensive collaboration is driven by legal requirements and by the desire to produce a document that meets the needs of the park, its visitors, and those of the public and other government entities.

Depending upon the complexities of the issues, additional public meetings (beyond the three planned) may be scheduled. During the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) public and Agency review period the preliminary general plan will be made available at local libraries and various government offices. This review period meets the legal requirements for CEQA. It provides an opportunity for written comments to be made about the plan (and for State Parks to respond to those comments in writing). In-person comments also can be made at the scheduled public meetings. Following the CEQA review, the Preliminary General Plan and EIR will be presented to the State Parks and Recreation Commission for its final approval.



*CEQA refers to the California Environmental Quality Act, which, among other legal requirements, ensures that there is adequate opportunity for public response to government development proposals and planning efforts, such as general plans.

Asilomar: A Short History

Asilomar's original conference grounds became part of the State Park System in 1956, yet it has always retained its status as a special "refuge by the sea." The center was originally created in 1913 as a Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) training and conference center. Since coming to the state in 1956, acre-



age has been added and facilities developed, including the State Park's William Penn Mott Jr. Training Center, which was opened in 1973.

In 1975, a private firm completed a general plan for the park, which didn't address the park's rich cultural values. The general plan was revised in 1985, primarily to address the development needs of newly acquired East Woods.

In 1987, a portion of the park was listed as both a National Historic Landmark and National Register of Historic Places District. This changed status will help direct the current general planning effort to include a strong emphasis on historic values.

A new general plan was begun in 1992. By 1994, budgeting shortfalls, the department's reorganization of park operations, and the need to identify and address the concerns of a new concessionaire tabled work on the general plan. This new plan picks up where the 1992-94 plan left off, and includes review of the previous work to ensure that the original data remains accurate and relevant to current trends, needs, and conditions.



For More Information and to Offer Ideas or Concerns:

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For information about Asilomar and other state parks: www.parks.ca.gov

Written comments may be submitted to:

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